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Items for information: culture statistics

### United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

#### Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session,\*\* the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

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\* E/CN.3/2010/1.

\*\* See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 4 (E/2009/24)*, chap I.A.



## **Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics**

### **I. Introduction**

1. The present report has been produced in response to the request of information of the United Nations Statistical Commission on the status of the new 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics. The report outlines the purpose and objective of the 2009 Framework, the process undertaken for its development and the next steps for its implementation.

### **II. Background**

2. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics is the lead agency in the United Nations system for global statistics on culture. The main activities of the Institute in the field of cultural statistics are: (a) survey operations and data guardianship; (b) the development of new methodologies, standards and indicators in cultural statistics; (c) training and capacity-building in cultural statistics; and (d) the analysis and dissemination of culture data. These activities are carried out in the framework of collaboration and partnerships with national, regional and international governmental and civil-society organizations.

3. In 2005, as part of its work in the development of new methodologies, standards and indicators in cultural statistics, the Institute identified the need for a revision of and update to the 1986 Framework for Cultural Statistics making it a priority in order to strengthen its programme and activities in the field of cultural statistics.

4. Since the elaboration of the Framework in 1986, many important changes have taken place in cultural practices and policies throughout the world. Thus, by 2005, it became imperative to launch a revision process of the Framework to reflect these changes and, in particular, those related to the increased use and impact of new digital information and communication technologies.

5. A revised Framework was also needed to better reflect the demands and concerns of developing countries, the worldwide policy shift towards integrating culture within the broader economic and social agendas, as well as the new interrelated notions of "creative" industries.

6. Furthermore, a revised Framework had to consider the appropriateness and feasibility of incorporating new elements — like "intangible" cultural heritage — as well as being open to emerging issues such as the measurement of diversity.

7. Between July 2005 and December 2007, and on the basis of the expert study commissioned, the Institute undertook a first consultation with a large number of individual experts, scholars, statisticians and international organizations. In December 2007, and following the integration of the different inputs received, the Institute developed a preliminary revised draft of the new Framework. An extensive consultation programme with Member States, international organizations and other stakeholders was initiated in January 2008.

8. The consultation process consisted of four main activities, namely: (a) direct consultation with Member States soliciting comments and feedback, in particular from national statistical offices and ministries of culture or similar authorities; (b) direct consultations with international partner agencies and organizations; (c) the organization of regional consultations which offered Member States an additional opportunity to provide comments and discuss issues surrounding the proposal for a revised Framework; and (d) the establishment of a task force to finalize the revised draft of the new Framework.

9. Comments were received from all regions, including in the case of some Member States, replies from both the national statistical offices and the ministries of culture and similar authorities. All comments received were thoroughly reviewed and considered.

10. International organizations including EUROSTAT, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and individual experts were also consulted. The Institute received comments from international organizations both through the global consultation process as well as through the regional consultation process.

11. Between June 2008 and January 2009, the Institute undertook a series of consultative workshops to elicit further responses and to facilitate discussions of key aspects of the Framework between Member States and other stakeholders, particularly in the African, Arab, Asia-Pacific and Latin America regions where the response rate was somehow lower. Representatives from the national statistical offices and from national ministries of culture and similar authorities, as well as regional experts and representatives from international organizations also took part in these regional consultations. A special effort was made to reach out to countries that did not provide a response to the request of the Institute for comments on the draft Framework. The preliminary draft version of the Framework received important support and endorsement in all the regional consultations held.

#### Response rate by region

| <i>Region</i>                   | <i>Contributing countries</i> | <i>Total countries</i> | <i>Response rate<br/>(in percentage)</i> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Sub-Saharan Africa              | 19                            | 45                     | 42                                       |
| Arab States                     | 15                            | 20                     | 75                                       |
| Asia and the Pacific            | 22                            | 52                     | 42                                       |
| Europe and North America        | 35                            | 48                     | 73                                       |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 13                            | 38                     | 34                                       |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>104</b>                    | <b>203</b>             | <b>51</b>                                |

12. The Institute established an expert task force whose mandate was to review the final version of the revised Framework, which was built from the discussions and comments received during the consultative process. In addition, the task force was to assist with the drafting of the final version and make final recommendations on the specific issues raised during the process. The task force met from 23 to 25 February 2009 at the Institute in Montreal, Canada. Its work will continue via electronic means of communication until May 2009. The task force was composed

of 12 experts in the field of cultural statistics representing a diverse global geographical composition and who for the most part had participated in the regional consultation workshops.

13. In March 2009, a briefing session on the Framework was held for UNESCO delegations during the 181st session of the UNESCO Executive Board. Subsequently, the new Framework was presented at the 35th session of the UNESCO General Conference in October 2009, where a briefing session on the Framework was also held for delegations.

### III. The new 2009 Framework for Cultural Statistics

14. The 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics establishes a conceptual model for defining culture for statistical purposes. It is a tool for organizing and collecting comparable cultural data. As a classification instrument, it applies taxonomies of activities, goods and services from recognized international standard classifications to cultural statistics.

15. The measurement of the economic dimension of culture is more fully developed in the Framework due to the greater availability of economic data and the existence of the many international classification systems in use. However, equally important is the social dimension of culture, including culture participation and intangible cultural heritage. Although initial elements for their measurement are proposed, further work is required.

16. The Framework is a classification instrument that incorporates the use of currently available international classification systems such as the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities for cultural production activities, the Central Product Classification (CPC) for cultural goods and services, the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) for cultural employment, the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) for international flows of cultural goods, and the United Nations Draft International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics (ICATUS) for cultural participation. The result is a tool and methodology designed for use at the international and national levels as a basis for organizing the collection and dissemination of cultural statistics. It attempts to reflect the widest range possible of activities related to the production, distribution and use of culture.

17. UNESCO defines culture as "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being value systems, traditions and beliefs".<sup>1</sup> Whereas it is not always possible to measure such beliefs and values directly, it is possible to measure associated behaviours and practices. As such, the 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics defines culture through the identification and measurement of the behaviours and practices resulting from the beliefs and values of a society or a social group.

<sup>1</sup> See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies*, World Conference on Cultural Policies, Mexico City, 26 July-6 August 1982.

18. The cultural domains defined in the Framework represent a common set of economic (such as the production of goods and services) and social (such as participation in cultural activities) activities that traditionally have been regarded as being "cultural". In addition, related domains consist of other economic and social activities that may be considered "partially cultural" or that are more often regarded as being "recreational or leisure" rather than "purely cultural".

19. Although, as a starting point, most of the current standards used for elaborating these definitions are based on an economic perspective, the interpretation of the resulting domain is not limited solely to the economic aspects of culture but extends to all aspects of that domain. Thus, the definition for the measurement of "performance" includes all performances, whether these are amateur or professional and take place in a formal concert hall or in an open space in a rural village.

20. In addition, the framework emphasizes three "transversal" domains that can be measured across a range of cultural domains. The education and training, archiving and preserving, and intangible cultural heritage domains are categorized as transversal cultural domains; the inclusion of each of these three dimensions is critical to measuring the full breadth of cultural expression.

21. The capacity of countries to collect and disseminate statistics on culture will vary greatly depending upon their respective policy priorities, statistical expertise, and human and financial resources. The framework is designed explicitly to be flexible and adaptable at the national level.

22. The framework is also built upon the culture cycle model of the cultural sector, which helps to understand the relationships between the different cultural processes. The cycle illustrates the totality of practices, activities and necessary resources that are required to transform ideas into cultural goods and services that, in turn, reach consumers, participants or users.

23. The framework includes all current relevant international statistical classification systems and standards in order to maximize data comparability and the potential for using existing surveys to measure culture. These classification systems provide countries with a comprehensive framework to collect and disseminate cultural data. It also serves as a guide to measuring cultural activities, goods and services using standard economic statistics and household surveys, such as labour force surveys and censuses. Countries with no national cultural framework will be able to use the basic fundamental structure of the Framework.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

24. The 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics will lay the foundation for new methodologies, data collection and indicators developed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, as well as for UNESCO action in the field of culture. The Commission may wish to take note of the present report.